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Examiners' Report

Summer 2013

GCE Music Technology
Listening and Analysing: 6MT02

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General Introduction

Candidates' responses maintained parity with previous series. As always, there were some candidates who were more comfortable with the technological aspects of the paper than others, and some who were more au fait with the musical ones. A good vocabulary is expected in both cases.

Candidates are reminded to use the space provided on the question paper. Generally speaking, candidates who used additional sheets tended to be either repeating themselves, writing irrelevant information, or giving more information when they had clearly made sufficient points to gain full marks; this was particularly the case in 6(i).

Candidates are also reminded of the importance of clear handwriting; if a response cannot be read, it cannot be marked.

The vast majority of candidates completed the paper in the allotted time.

Question 1

1(c) Very few candidates gave evidence of headphones being worn the wrong way, however, some responses were lacking in detail.

1(f) Candidates are reminded of the need for clarity in placing notes on the stave. Many candidates' responses were difficult or impossible to mark as the writing of the notes was badly done. Credit was given wherever possible.

Question 2

2(b) A surprising number of candidates identified the track as Prog Rock, possibly because of the analogue synth sound.

2(c) A significant percentage of candidates could not identify the LPF, whilst some referred to the moving filtering. A large amount of candidates gave the response, 'Phaser or flange'. There was a full range of marks.

2(f) Generally well-answered, although a significant number of candidates described close micing rather than using the term.

2(g) Many candidates referred to a slowing down of tempo rather than the 'half time' feel. A significant percentage of candidates mention ghost notes (rolls) on the snare and the changing patterns in the snare and high hat.

Question 3

3(b) This was generally well-answered, although, as in 2(g), there was much description rather than the use of correct terminology. This should be encouraged.

3(c) There is still some confusion with candidates between overdubbing and double tracking.

3(d) This question was a differentiator with many candidates scoring 1-2 marks, particularly identifying the last chord. However, the full range of marks was awarded.

3(f) Again, the candidates with a thorough knowledge and understanding of compression scored well here.

Question 4

4(b) A surprising number of candidates' responses referred to shifting panning (different words panned to different parts of the stereo field), when the backing vocals were left and right, with the lead vocal central.

4(c) This was mostly well-answered, with the majority of candidates identifying both polar patterns and placement. Some candidates identified microphone *types* (dynamic, condenser) rather than the polar *pattern*.

Question 5

5(b) A significant proportion of candidates referred to a change of *tempo* rather than a change of *groove*.

5(c) A large percentage of answers included reference to click tracks and metronomes, which do not, in themselves, make the performances tighter. Candidates often responded by describing recording techniques such as close micing and mixing techniques such as use of reverb and compression.

5(d) Correct solutions were frequently identified. However, some candidates presented solutions using modern technology.

5(h) Candidates were, again, fairly well-prepared this year. Most candidates chose Elvis Presley; the second choice of artist was fairly evenly spread between Bill Haley and Buddy Holly.

Many candidates referred to Elvis's dance moves, his clothing and his lifestyle rather than focusing on his *musical* style, as the question asks. Other than this, references to Sun Records, his country roots, his development into rockabilly and the fact that he was a white singer singing in a black style often scored high marks.

Buddy Holly was, perhaps, less well-answered, with a surprising number of candidates claiming he was a black artist. There were plenty of references to his death, but little analysis or explanation of why this was significant.

Candidates who chose Bill Haley and His Comets generally answered well, identifying the country/rockabilly styles, and commenting on the way in which he helped to bring the genre into the mainstream.

Candidates are reminded to make specific comments, rather than to make general statements.

Question 6

6(c) A significant proportion of candidates assumed this was a bass guitar, rather than a synthesiser.

6(d) Answers here were often confused, describing micing up a synth with multiple mics etc. Again, the understanding of technology was sometimes lacking.

6(f) This was extremely well-answered with a wide range of responses.
6(g) This question brought a range of responses, and again highlights the need for knowledge of technological vocabulary. Section (i) was not well-answered in general, with many candidates guessing. Section (ii) was correctly identified in significantly more responses. In section (iii), many candidates showed that they were aware of the switch and its function, but were unable to state the name of that switch. Section (iv) was well-handled by the majority of candidates, with some creative responses.

6(i) Candidates were extremely well-prepared for this genre, possibly because they found it more accessible, or more current than Rock and Roll.

Most candidates referred to the roots of the genre, with the Sugarhill Gang often receiving a mention. Discussion of the technological development of the genre was usually well and accurately described, although not always in great detail. Discussion of the social and political issues was also well-handled, with reference to New School and Gangsta. Some candidates referred to later artists such as Eminem and Snoop Dogg, both of whom are outside the realms of the question.

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